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**The Beatitudes: Matthew 5:1-12 - The Character of the Kingdom**  
**Part Ten: A Final Summary**

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Over the past several months, we have been examining in depth what are usually called in Christian parlance, The Beatitudes. They are eight short statements made by Jesus Christ at the beginning of His most important moral discourse, the Sermon on the Mount. The principles outlined by the Lord portray the kind of qualities that should characterize His followers. In the final installment of this ten part series, *The Beatitudes - The Character of the Kingdom*, we will review how we interpret the meanings of each of the Beatitudes, their applications to our lives, and the promises Jesus attached to each one. To read the previous nine installments in their entirety go to:

<http://www.marketfaith.org/2018/12/the-beatitudes>.

**Beatitude one: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

This beatitude demands we acknowledge two important truths about being "poor in spirit." First, it asserts we cannot succeed in life apart from God. Any thought that we are self-sufficient is an illusion, and against how Jesus tells us to live. Second, we need to acknowledge our sinfulness and weakness, our reliance on God for our salvation, and for the power to overcome sin. This is what it means to be "poor in spirit." It is only when we approach life with this kind of humility that we can claim the promise ... "theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

**Beatitude Two: Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.**

In Jesus' statement, "mourning" has three aspects. The first is the natural feeling of pain we

experience at the loss of a loved one in death, or for other reasons. Jesus says that, in those times, He will supernaturally give us comfort and peace through His Holy Spirit.

The second aspect of "mourning" is taking seriously the seriousness of our sin against God. It is our own grieving over our own sin. Therefore, we should confess our sins to God and acknowledge His forgiveness. Mourning, in this sense, is the humbling of ourselves before the Lord in contrition for our disobedience, and receiving His forgiveness.

The third application of "mourning" is when we agonize over the spiritual condition of others. As Christians, we should feel in our hearts a strong desire to see lost people come to salvation in Christ.

**Beatitude Three: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.**

In our study, we made it clear that Jesus does not equate "meekness" (or gentleness) with weakness. Rather, He has several other concepts we need to learn. First, meekness is our attitude toward ourselves and how we express it toward others. By reminding ourselves that we are sinners saved by grace, it makes us more humble, and allows us to act with gentility and grace.

Second, meekness is an absence of pride, yet remaining firm on matters of principle. As we said, being meek does not mean we compromise our convictions. Sometimes we must take a stand, but do so in ways that honor God. We can hold tight to our beliefs without arrogance or hostility if truth, justice, and righteousness are on our side.

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Third, being meek means being willing to accept criticism if it is justified. We all make mistakes. Sometimes we act impulsively. Sometimes we act or speak without considering the consequences. Meekness, in this case, is being able to receive criticism when it is warranted.

So we can see what meekness is in Jesus teaching, but what exactly did He mean by His promise that the meek "shall inherit the earth?" In the New Testament, that image is used by Jesus and the other writers in relation to inheriting (or not inheriting) the Kingdom of God and everlasting life. That will be the blessing of the meek.

**Beatitude Four: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.**

We all feel hunger and thirst in our bodies when we need food and drink. But hungering and thirsting for righteousness runs much deeper. It is deeply desiring and praying to be right with God, and to be like Him. Our greatest desire should be to live in ways that are glorifying to Him, and in line with His revealed will.

Second, hungering and thirsting for righteousness is a desire to be free from sin and from the desire to sin. We should desire, with the help of the Holy Spirit, in our deepest soul, to have victory over sin and to be free of its influence in our lives. This is, of course, a lifetime quest, and will only end in glory.

Third, hungering and thirsting for righteousness is a sincere desire to put Christ first in life. Jesus makes a promise to those who take this one seriously. He says simply "they shall be satisfied." If we sincerely desire to live righteously in accord with His will, He will see His purposes fulfilled in our lives.

**Beatitude Five: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.**

Being merciful, according to Jesus, involves several important principles. First, a merciful person is one who is keenly aware that he or she is himself or herself an unworthy recipient of God's mercy. The fundamental basis of Christian salvation is that it is entirely by grace. Once we understand that fact it changes our whole perspective about how we see ourselves and how we see others.

Thus, being merciful is an attitude that shows the same mercy towards others that we received from God. Once we truly grasp how much our salvation cost God, how can we feel anything other than a desire to show mercy to others. This is the source of genuine Christian compassion. We are to see others as God sees them. Perhaps our kindness will demonstrate God's love and grace in a way that draws them to Christ.

So what is the consequence of all this giving of mercy? The merciful will receive mercy from God. The more we show mercy, the more He will reward us with his grace – not for salvation, that is already provided for, but in our daily lives we experience a higher sense of His presence and love.

**Beatitude Six: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.**

Being "pure in heart" is having a single-minded, uncompromising devotion to God. No matter what we are doing, we must always keep God at the center of it all. Everything should be done for the purpose of giving Him glory and honor.

Being "pure in heart" is also a characteristic of someone whose heart has been purified by the experiences of life. As believers who grow in faith as we age, we see the hand of God at work in our lives through the years. Consequently, our spiritual hearts become more attuned to God's purposes. Being pure in heart, furthermore, is the internal discipline of placing one's

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thoughts under God's rule. Not only should we yield our physical bodies to Him, but we must also yield our mental processes. When we place our internal thoughts under His Lordship, we are able to reflect a righteous spiritual life.

Jesus says the pure in heart "shall see God." We understand this promise in two ways – one figuratively, and the other more literal. First, in this life, if we are pure in heart we can enjoy an intimate relationship with God. We know, of course, that is only possible through faith in Christ. We can experience His presence in ways that transcend our senses. The other, more literal, sense of seeing God, is yet to come. When Christ returns and we ultimately arrive at our heavenly home, "we will see Him as He is."

## Beatitude Seven: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

This Beatitude has several applications. First, Christians should be involved as much as possible to resolve peacefully conflicts among individuals, people groups, and nations. It also means seeking reconciliation among peoples (especially among fellow believers in Christ). Ultimately, we need to remember that Jesus is the only real hope for the world, and the universe, for eternal peace. Only when He returns will peace finally be made on earth.

So, being a peacemaker principally

means seeking to bring others to peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ. It is through God's grace and our faith in Christ that we can know and experience real lasting peace. It is the only way to bridge the gap of sin and bring peace and reconciliation between ourselves and God.

## Beatitude Eight: Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

When Jesus speaks of being persecuted, He means to be wrongly mistreated, beaten, jailed, or even killed unjustly for doing what is right in

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God's sight, and "because of Me." A believer who takes a public stand for Christ and is actively sharing the Gospel can expect to get, and will get, opposition. If we, or believers in other lands, are persecuted, it should be for Christ's sake. However, Jesus guarantees those who suffer in His name (like the Hebrew prophets) will be greatly rewarded in heaven. Our ultimate blessing does not come in this life. It will be in the life to come.

So concludes this study of the Beatitudes. We sincerely hope it has helped you get a better understanding of Jesus' words. The most important thing is that you see how they are as relevant today as when Jesus presented them to His followers. The Beatitudes are the keys to developing Christlike character for citizens of the Kingdom of God. Pray that God will give you the strength and courage to live them out each day.